

Charlotte Wolfrey

My daughter's name was Deidre Mary Michelin, she was murdered on January 20th, 1993.

The case was solved, it was a murder suicide. I lived in a real small community and actually my daughter had called for help all day and in the days before she knew she was going to die. She was calling for help and their response was "until he does something, there's nothing we can do". She actually knew she was going to die and she was calling for help. I was out of town and she didn't really tell anybody except, she was talking with the police. There was no disciplinary action but the Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association of Canada actually did a report into her death and into the police conduct leading up to her death, so there's a report on file. I don't think it led to any conclusions, but I think, I'm hearing that the police did use it to point out some of the things that they did wrong and that they could have done better in training later on. I'm hoping that's right, I'm just hearing that so I don't know.

I live in a small community in Northern Labrador called Rigolet and we're part of what's called Nunatsiavut and it's really the land claims settlement area of the Labrador Inuit. And at the time of my daughter's murder there were no police stationed in three of the communities. So, when she called for help, it couldn't have been instant anyway if she really needed it—it would have taken hours or it could have been days if the weather was bad. And so, after she died, I put all of my energy, and the fight that I had in me, to try to get police stationed in the three communities that didn't have police. Eight years later, we did get police. I went to meetings, I met with premiers, ministers of justice, prime ministers, every meeting I went to I talked about the need for police in our communities. And Labrador women got together and told their stories and engaged in a process that ended up, eight years later, with us getting police.

I think Inuit women have a high rate of murder and a lot of it is domestic or family violence. I don't really know where it comes from but it seems like there's an acceptance of violence, it's not talked about, it's still really hidden. In 2016, violence is still really hidden, in the north I think, in the north in general, and I can speak for Nunatsiavut for sure, its hidden there.

I think that they [families] should really be insistent that justice is served, and don't give up. And for healing, my humble advice is to do everything you can, whatever works for you, and to remember that in such an abnormal circumstance, that your thoughts and things like that are normal. It's normal to think strange stuff and things like that because, you are dealing with an abnormal, unpredictable, inhumane, and an unreal situation that you've been forced into.

Well to be honest, I don't think I really grieved until we got police because all of my focus and all of my energy; I was on a mission to seek some kind of justice, to be sure that other women's daughters didn't have to do this, and that four children in a house where that happened, that it didn't happen to any other children. I was on a mission. So, the day I got the call to say that there was going to be police stationed in my community—it was really bittersweet. It was on that day that I didn't know what to do with my life, and I had to face

what happened to me. So that was eight years later. And it took me eight years to really start dealing with, because I was doing stuff with my head, and eight years later it was my heart that I really had to deal with. But, I was a mom on a mission and the mission wouldn't have been accomplished with only me, it was a lot of Labrador women but, you know, we got that done so yeah. And then, like I said, I started dealing with my grief.